

# GREAT EXPECTATIONS

central illinois hosta society  
[www.cihshostaclub.org](http://www.cihshostaclub.org)

july 2010  
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## Sue's News

July is here, and summer is in full swing. I just returned from the National Hosta Convention in Minnesota, and am still amazed at the gardens I saw there. Everything from "postage stamp" city lots to massive acreage, all planted beautifully! What an inspiration! Now I need to get into my garden, and put all my ideas to work! I am sure that I am like many other gardeners in that my ideas are often larger than my time, energy, or money supplies, but one can dream!

I want to thank Bill and Toni for sharing their garden last month. It was a wonderful combination of sun and shade gardens! The rain stopped just in time, and it was a beautiful evening. I am now looking forward to seeing Connie Zuercher's Garden. I sympathize with her, and everyone who takes care of large gardens, as they really are a lot of work, but the rewards are usually just as large, and they are a joy to visit and see all the variety. I hope to see you all this month in Connie's garden, and hope that the rain has stopped by then!

Sue Eckhoff, CIHS President

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## The Next Meeting

**Tuesday, July 20, 6:30 pm**  
Connie Zuercher's Garden  
1488 W. Birchwood, Morton, IL

In 1987 Pat and I purchased this 4-acre, 1876 fixer-upper. It only had 9 real trees on the property. We immediately put in 250 conservation department spruce and pine trees. Over the first years here, we

collected many other trees and shrubs. As they have grown, we've cut down and transplanted many of them to form the basis for the gardens that we have now. We have a predilection for beech trees and have 14 different cultivars. Pat built a large pergola to also house a shade garden in 1998 when a tornado took out our very large ash tree. There is a long ornamental grass/perennial/shrub bed on the north of the property (front yard) that is still under construction, and our original perennial bed started in 1987 in the backyard which is in dire need of reconstruction! (weeds!) There have been many hosta planted under the tree filled beds in front and I am sure there will always be room for more. If there is any advice I can give to a gardener, it is to remember that dimension of time. There have been many nice things destroyed in our yard, as we did not provide them adequate room when we planted them. And oh, by the way, only two of the original trees remain, my husband and I have planted everything else.

**Directions:** Take 74 to 155 south and get off at the Birchwood exit. Turn left onto Birchwood or west towards Groveland. Before you enter the S curve there is a pine tree lined property on the south side of the road. At the tree stump mailbox you will turn down a spruce-lined lane (1488 W. Birchwood Street).

**Notice:** To provide adequate time for viewing Host Gardens, each Garden will be open to visitors ½ hour early at 6:00, while the meeting starts at 6:30.





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## Hosta of the Month

**Regal Rhubarb (M-L)** Large semi-upright mound of green leaves with distinct red/purple petioles. Dark flower buds. Not as vivid as Hosta Red October but still a really tidy looking hosta with great colors.

**Abby (S)** Dark green leaves bordered in yellow to chartreuse. It forms a small but dense mound, 7 inches high and 16-18 inches wide, making a terrific border plant.

**Swirling Hearts (M-L)** Uniquely swirled dark green large heart shaped leaves. Quite different. Lavender flowers.

**Blonde Elf (D)** the yellow to pale gold leaves on this small clump make for a great border plant. Bearing lavender flowers, each clump is 7-8 inches high and less than 2 feet wide. Foliage color often gets paler in more light.

**Honeymoon (L)** Nice mound of wavy, honey-yellow colored shiny foliage.

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## The Good, the Bad & the Ugly!!!!

It's time to have fun with hosta! At our July Meeting, we are going to have a leaf show...not the formal kind, though. We are looking for the **biggest mature leaf, smallest mature leaf, ugliest leaf** (please no nematodes, slugs, or disease...just an ugly leaf), **the bluest leaf, yellowest leaf** and finally a **yellow-edged leaf with a yellow center** (Ella said there are only 9 registered hosta of this kind). Prizes will be awarded and our judges will be our education committee. If there is a tie between leaves, judges will grade the leaves on their condition. Just wrap your leaf in a paper towel and we will check them in and label them. Any questions, contact Charlotte Woodhouse at 243-5826

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## The Hosta Library

If you would like to check out a magazine or book from the Hosta Library, see Ella Maxwell at a meeting or call her at 309.444.3758.

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## 2010 Hosta Happenings

**July 8-10**  
**Midwest Regional Convention**  
Des Moines, IA

**2010 Bus Trip**  
Champaign/Urbana

**Tuesday, July 20, 6:30 pm**  
Connie Zuercher's Garden  
1448 W. Birchwood, Morton, IL

**Tuesday, August 17, 6:30 pm**  
**Hosta Auction**  
Illinois Central College, Land Lab

**Tuesday, Sept. 21, 6:30 pm**  
(see article)

**Annual Banquet**  
Kickapoo Creek Winery  
6605 N. Smith Road, Edwards, IL  
**Speaker:** Rob Mortko, from Made in the Shade Gardens

## Officers

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## To join:

Central Illinois Hosta Society  
\$10/year, form on back cover

Midwest Reg. Hosta Society  
\$20/2 years  
Send dues to:  
Barb Schroeder, Treasurer  
1819 Coventry Drive  
Champaign, IL 61822-5239

American Hosta Society  
\$30 individual, \$57/2 years  
\$34 family, \$62/2 years  
Send dues to:  
Sandie Markland  
AHS Membership Secretary  
Post Office Box 7539  
Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948

## Auction!!!

On Tuesday, August 17<sup>th</sup> our semi-annual plant auction will take place at the ICC Land Lab. The auction will start promptly at 6:30 and continue until the plants are sold.

Members are encouraged to contribute disease-free plants or interesting garden items. Please bring your donation to the Land Lab building at least **30 minutes before** the auction starts or contact Shirley Metz at 263.7103 or [jametz@comcast.net](mailto:jametz@comcast.net) to make other arrangements.

Bring your lawn chair & checkbook...we will have many wonderful plants and garden items to choose from. Come join us for a wonderful evening!!!

## Annual Banquet!!!

The final event on the 2010 calendar is our banquet. The gala will be held Tuesday September 21<sup>st</sup> at the Kickapoo Creek Winery (6605 N. Smith Road, Edwards, Illinois). The cash bar will open at 5:45, dinner will start at 6:30 and the program is to start around 7:30.

The cost is \$35 for CIHS Members and \$40 for the public. The cost includes a lovely buffet dinner, an outstanding hosta selection and an entertaining program presented by Rob Mortko.

Rob is the owner of **Made in the Shade Gardens**, located in Olathe Kansas. He will present a program titled "Miracles out of Nowhere - in Your Hosta Garden and Mine." Miracles surround us in the world of plants. Some may be less obvious than others, but no less marvelous to the discerning eye. Most amazing is that these miracles can and do happen in our very own gardens. Hosta are the most popular of all perennials and provide an excellent example of how Mother Nature brings us an endless array of such miracles. In the presentation, Rob will explore how hosta sports occur and how they often defy our best understanding. Rob's journey with his own little miracle, *Hosta* 'Stitch in Time,' has been



rewarding, challenging and even frustrating; often leaving him and the experts with more questions than answers.

An added bonus, Rob will have a great selection of many of his introductions available for us to purchase.

Sign up for the Banquet starts at the upcoming July meeting. Make checks payable to CIHS. Please contact Shirley Metz for more information: 263.7103 or [jametz@comcast.net](mailto:jametz@comcast.net)



## Bus Trip Saturday, July 17th

We're heading to Champaign/Urbana. We plan to visit five of the personal gardens featured last year on the Midwest Regional Convention Tour and stop at 2 nurseries, along the way, to shop!!!! We will be eating lunch "on the road," so please pack your own lunch. CIHS will provide donuts, snacks and drinks. If you have any questions, call Golda at 309.360.3719. A tentative itinerary for the excursion is provided below:

We will be leaving promptly at 7:00 AM from the parking lot by Kroger at the corner of Sheridan and Lake.

- 9:00 Arrive at the Metz garden
- 9:45 Head to the Weber garden
- 10:55 Head to the Myer and Guardia gardens
- 12:30 Leave for Country Arbors Nursery
- 1:00 Arrive at Country Arbors Nursery
- 2:30 Head to Schroeder garden and arrive at 3:00
- 4:00 Begin drive home w/stop at Growing Grounds
- 6:00 Leave Bloomington
- 7:00 Arrival in Peoria

## Too Cold, Too Hot, and Just Right

It seems like just yesterday I was looking out cold window glass thinking about the spring to come. With today's forecast of 90 plus



degrees, I find myself pecking the computer's key board, sharing thoughts about how quickly winter has turned into summer and how to cope with this phenomenon. Where did the beautiful gardening days of spring go!

Like the first two bowls of porridge tasted in the nursery rhyme "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," the weather in central Illinois is often too cold or too hot to garden comfortably. Gardening in the spring and fall is more like the third bowl of porridge, which Goldilocks said was just right.

Gardeners have to cope with a number of obstacles, but probably none more serious than the negative effects of the sun. How to protect oneself from heat and ultraviolet (UV) rays is mostly common sense, but regardless of the subject, we can all benefit from an occasional reminder.

The successful game plan shared by many gardeners is to work hard and long in the spring and in the fall, and for the most part refrain from working during the heat of the day during the summer. Early morning work sessions are typically more peaceful, comfortable and productive than expending the same effort after the mercury has moved several degrees north.

There are periods of time when particular areas of gardens are more protected from the sun. Plan your work accordingly. Shielding oneself from direct rays protects the body and provides more comfortable working conditions. Wearing light colored loose fitting clothing and a wide-brim hat certainly helps. Other recommendations include sunscreen lotion (SPF greater than 15) and UV-absorbent sunglasses. Keep in mind that UV rays are most intense between 10 AM and 4 PM.

Slightly off topic, but depending on your particular area and time of the day, applying a personal insect repellent or at least an area repellent is advisable.

It is also very important to keep the body hydrated and to prevent it from becoming too hot. Even in shady areas, we can feel the stress of heat. In hot environments, drinking water before you feel thirsty is recommended, as thirst is a late signal for a water deficiency. Keep water, fruit juices, fruit-flavored or carbonated drinks at the ready. Since aging can cause a decreased thirst sensation, elderly persons should drink liquids at regular intervals during the day, even if they do not feel thirsty. Avoid alcoholic beverages and those containing caffeine. Salt tablets are not substitutes for fluids.

Don't hesitate to take frequent breaks to lower your body temperature (preferably in a cooler area), and use good judgment as to when to stop working.

So, if you started work really early and worked really hard, it may then be time to take a well deserved nap, just like Goldilocks, in the bed that was just right!

For additional information, see Illinois Department of Public Health, Hot Weather Information, <http://www.idph.state.il.us/public/hb/hbheat.htm>

By Ray Rodgers, CIHS

## Hosta Leaf Sculptures

### Tools and Materials:

Bucket  
Fine sand  
Cement  
Powdered pigment  
Bonding agent (a concrete-strengthening additive)  
Plastic wrap  
Inexpensive 2-inch paintbrush  
Exterior latex paint  
Paintbrush

Seattle-area sculptors George Little and David Lewis are known for their beautiful concrete castings of large leaves such as hostas, which they then paint in whimsical colors to accent the garden. George and David love working with concrete because it fills every line and pore of a mold to precisely reproduce its details; the molds for their leaf sculptures are the leaves themselves.

The sculptors began experimenting with grape leaves, then moved on to larger leaves. The largest one they currently produce is Gunnera, which can grow up to six and a half feet wide.



### Hosta Leaf Sculpture How-To

1. Choose a large, sturdy, unblemished hosta leaf from your garden.
2. In a bucket, mix 3 parts fine sand, 1 part cement, and pigment as desired. **Continued on page 5**

- Add a little bonding agent and enough water to make a paste. The mixture needs to be easily workable, like spread-able cream cheese, but not too wet or dry.
3. Make a heap of sand (do not pack down tightly) about 6 inches deep and 4 to 6 inches larger than the leaf all around.
  4. Press the leaf gently into the sand, with the bottom side of the leaf facing upward. Push sand around the edges where needed and add a little more under the leaf where required. This supports the leaf under the layer of heavy concrete you'll apply.
  5. Place strips of plastic wrap under the edges of the leaf to keep the sand away from the concrete.
  6. With gloves, spread the concrete mixture over the leaf to form a layer about 1/2 inch thick, following the contours and thinning to about 1/4 inch at the edges. Brush smooth with a damp 2-inch paintbrush.
  7. Let set overnight, covered with plastic wrap.
  8. The next day, pull the leaf off of the concrete and gently trim any rough edges by scraping them with an old screwdriver or knife.
  9. To paint your leaf sculpture, mix 1 part exterior latex paint in a color of your choice with 2 parts water, and brush over the surface of the leaf. Wipe at once with a soft cotton cloth to remove enough paint to provide a good finish. The paint should be thicker in the veins to emphasize the texture of the leaf.
  10. Allow to dry. You can paint the back with undiluted paint to finish.



**By Kim Swisher of the Wichita Hosta Society; reprinted from the Tri-state Tribune the newsletter from New York, New Jersey & Connecticut**

## In Defense of Bamboo

What's green, sometimes short, well behaved, and has been known to bring grown men to their knees? I've even seen an esteemed member of our own Tri-State Hosta Society recoil in fear at the sight of a nursery pot with this plant in it. You guessed it: BAMBOO!

How did such a garden worthy plant get such a bum rap? Well, it's the age-old story of right plant, wrong place. We've all heard stories about how bamboo has come a-marchin' over property lines and taken over gardens and yards, kudzu-like in its efforts to establish itself in the most unlikely places.

Bamboo and hosta go together like Fred and Ginger, or maybe Sugar and Cream. So let's talk about what bamboo can do FOR you, not what it can do TO you.

First, you need to know that it comes in two main versions: clumping (which is the better behaved), and running (which can sometimes get away from you if not planted thoughtfully). Both versions can range in height from just a few inches, serving as ground covers, to several feet, providing lush, living screens.

Color variations and leaf shapes are delightful: yellow edges and centers, or white edges and centers. In many cases, they change their colors as the season progresses. Leaves can be sword-like or lance-shaped. They can stand straight up or gracefully arch. Gee, they sound a lot like hosta characteristics to me!

In winter, they actually hold onto their leaves that turn a buff color by about late January. So that screen you hoped to get from your grasses that was destroyed by December's ice storm would have been better if you had planted it with clumping bamboo. Moreover, if you had chosen a bamboo that had "sulcata" in its name, you would have gotten a bamboo with a culm (the term used to describe the strong woody stem) that zigs and zags, providing great winter interest.

Deer resistant evergreen screening for shade gardens is hard to find unless you want to sign up for the pest control of hemlock. Resistant cultivars for hemlock wooly adelgid are yet to be introduced to the market and I, for one, don't want the headache of that twice a year spray program, not to mention the toxicity of it. Enter bamboo: shade lover par excellence, deer resistant, disease and pest free. **Continued on page 6**

OK. Let's talk about that undeniable rampant running which you CAN control. First, you can get a pet Panda bear and feed it all the bamboo you don't want. Though mowing, or any way of removing the unwanted growth, will do the same for much less impact on the neighborhood. Cheaper still, you can put in a barrier which can be effective if you monitor it annually to check that bamboo rhizomes have not escaped over it. The roots will travel in the top foot of soil, so a barrier of 18 to 24 inches deep is effective if angled outward from the bamboo. A rhizome that hits a straight up-and-down barrier may go up or down so angling that barrier upward forces the root upward where you can cut it off. The barrier should project an inch or two above ground level.

A pond or stream can also act as an effective barrier as bamboo will not cross it. A sand bar will also stop bamboo. If you can surround your bamboo to a depth of about three feet with sand, you will successfully contain it since sand is another medium it will not cross. Your little beach would have to be about two feet wide.

Lastly, you could use the easiest method of all: cultural conditions. This is the one I chose for my zone 5/6 Connecticut garden. The running bamboo I planted 4 years ago has behaved very well. I chose cultivars that were marginally hardy for my zone and planted them in light and moisture conditions that were less than ideal for their growth. They have come along slowly, sparing me all that work of putting in barriers and digging among roots and rocks that just wasn't feasible. I was exhausted just thinking about it, not to mention the idea of the Panda!

So consider adding some bamboo to your shade garden. The texture and height of bamboo among hostas will add interest and variety and tell all others, "Bamboo doesn't scare ME!"

**By Lorraine Ballato; reprinted from the Tri-state Tribune the newsletter from New York, New Jersey & Connecticut**

## Volunteerism, Selflessness, Recognition & Diversity

Volunteerism, selflessness, and recognition of contributions could be considered the lifeblood of any plant society. Another key component is diversity. Diversity of individuals within any sizeable group is the norm, yet without it; companies, organizations, plant societies, etc. would not prosper.

The activities of plant societies are directed by the officers and committee chairs. Yet, it takes the efforts of many more individuals to ensure a successful society. As members, each and every one of us should find regular ways to contribute and to encourage by recognizing the efforts of others.

Contributions can come in many forms, including but not limited to the following:

- Become an officer or committee chair / helper (annual openings)
- Assist in website development and maintenance
- Photographs for monthly newsletter and/or website
- Write an article(s) for newsletter
- Become a paid advertiser in newsletter
- Open your garden for a monthly meeting and/or garden walk
- Lead or help with special projects (garden walks, auctions, information tables, etc.)
- Donate plants, garden tools, garden art, garden accessories, gift certificates, etc. for auctions and/or monthly meeting door prizes
- Provide treats for monthly meetings
- Encourage others to join the Central Illinois Hosta Society (CIHS)
- Encourage CIHS members to also join The American Hosta Society

If you are willing to help in any way, please inform one of the CIHS officers (typically listed in each newsletter). If you are asked to help, please consider accepting that opportunity to help your society.

**By Ray Rodgers, CIHS**

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Submit items for publication  
to: Bob Streitmatter  
309.264.4813  
[goldaandbob@hotmail.com](mailto:goldaandbob@hotmail.com)

**CIHS Membership Form** (please print)

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